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ABSTRACT

A growing movement to place all students with disabilities in the regular classroom, a practice called inclusion, has met with resistance from regular education teachers who would be responsible for educating special needs students. In order for inclusion to be successful, educators have determined that regular education teachers will require inservice training to increase their skills and improve their attitudes. Research on the subject indicates that inservice presentations are most effective in improving attitudes, while infusing information in teacher education coursework is the least effective. In line with this thinking, inservice training consisting of three 2-hour workshops and three days when the researcher was available for consultation with teachers was conducted in a New Mexico school district. The workshops provided an overview of inclusion; focused on modifications for special needs students; and covered collaboration and communication between professionals, families, and the community. Pre- and post-workshop survey data analysis indicated that teachers were receptive to the training and became more positive in their attitudes toward making changes for special needs students. While the teachers continued to resist the concept of full inclusion, they did vote unanimously to expand the inclusion of special education students into regular education homeroom classes for a portion of every school day. The document concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of this research on European countries. An outline of the inservice topics and activities is appended. (Contains approximately 35 references.) (LL)

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Topic#1

Improving Teachers' Attitudes Toward Students With Disabilities

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IMPROVING TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In the United States, there is a growing movement to place all students with disabilities in the regular classroom. This practice, called inclusion, has met with some resistance from regular education teachers who are now responsible for educating these special needs students. Researchers have identified teachers' attitudes as a major concern in exploring teachers' effects upon integrated, or mainstreamed students with disabilities. According to many educators, inclusion may be defeated if teachers do not hold positive attitudes toward this practice. Repeated findings have documented that regular teachers harbor negative attitudes toward students with disabilities integrated into regular classes. Since integrating students with disabilities is now commonly implemented, it is important to determine how university teacher training institutions may improve regular teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities. This paper will review the research on training regular education teachers to work with special needs students, the effects of teacher training programs on teachers attitudes, and how university programs can collaborate with schools to improve the attitudes of teachers toward students with disabilities. The principal author's own research and successful teacher training practices will be discussed. The implications of this research on emerging European countries will be reviewed by the second author.

There has been a consistent movement since the Education For All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142, EHA, 1975) to increase the integration of students with special needs into regular settings. The movement, to interpret "least restrictive environment" as the regular classroom, has been encouraged by the Regular Education Initiative (Will, 1986), updates in EHA to Individuals with Disabilities Act (PL 101-476, IDEA, 1990), and encouragement from the state for full inclusion (Morgan, 1991).

One major factor influencing the success of inclusion is the attitudes of regular teachers (Hudson, Reisberg, & Wolf, 1983). There is overwhelming evidence that teachers have negative attitudes toward inclusion and teaching students with special needs (Siegel, 1992; Houck, 1992; Lobosco & Newman, 1992; Phillips, Allred, Brulle & Shank, 1990; O'Reilly & Duquette, 1988; McClosky & Quay, 1987). Regular teacher's reluctance to teach special education students is mostly due to their inadequate training in special education. Regular eduction teachers do not believe they are trained to work with these students and believe they would be better served by special education teachers in a separate setting (Lombardi, 1990; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, Lesar, 1991). Proponents of full inclusion usually encourage special and regular education teachers to collaborate in the regular classroom setting as opposed to the traditional "pullout" delivery service where special education students are taught part, or all of the the day, in a special education classroom or resource room. It is their belief that inclusion will improve students' social and behavioral skills, increase their self esteem, and possibly improve their academic performance as well.

In order for inclusion to be successful, educators have determined that regular education teachers will require inservice training to greatly increase their skills and improve their attitudes. Evaluation of inservice training have demonstrated that this method can make significant differences in both areas with regular education teachers (Leyser & Abrams, 1984).

Several studies have been conducted to evaluate changes in teachers' attitudes towards inclusion of student with disabilities. Researchers have focused on the effects of graduate courses, district inservice workshops, videos, and collaborative activities. In the the majority of studies, teache

demonstrated more positive attitudes toward inclusion or special needs students, regardless of the methods employed for attitude change. Only a few studies examined long term attitude change, or compared different methods of attitude change.

Studies by Winzer (1984) and Leyser and Abrams (1984) identified improved teachers' attitudes after taking a special education graduate course. These courses were designed to train regular education teachers about students with disabilities over a semester. Koury and others (1993) also measured teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities after a graduate class. They found no significant changes in teachers' attitudes, but this lack of change may be due to the course's condensed time frame. This class was held in six days rather than over a semester, as traditional university courses.

Inservice workshops or presentations were examined by several researchers. These inservice training times ranged from one day to eight months and all found positive improvements in teachers' attitudes toward special needs students (Thompson, 1992; Baily, Gable & Hendrickson, 1991; Brown, 1985; McGettingan, 1985; Larrivee, 1981). Some researchers included additional activities along with their teachers training beyond lecture and discussion. Li (1985) added collaboration activities, while Gallagher (1992) incorporated model teaching, collaborative teaching and switching roles with regular education teachers, and Streifel and others (1987) included reverse mainstreaming to their inservice training. All three studies demonstrated positive impact on teachers' attitudes.

Both Inserni (1987) and Jacobson (1984) investigated long term and short term impacts of inservice workshops. In both cases, the positive change in teachers' attitudes held over time. Larrivee (1981) also found long term effects in changes of teachers' attitudes, but cautions that this change may not influence teachers' behavior. Inconsistencies between teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward integrated special education have been noted in previous studies (Leyser, 1988; Siegel, 1992).

Another format for changing inservice teachers' attitudes was the use of videos. Patrylo (1985) and Dowling (1985) found that showing teachers a video about students with disabilities did improve their attitudes toward these students. Another study (Walters, 1987), compared the use of independent study, films, and lecture with discussion to see which methods improved teacher's attitudes toward students with disabilities the most. The lecture with discussion group demonstrated the most improved

attitudes. This result suggests that teacher inservice presentations with discussion may be more effective than videos or independent study. Parrish (1982) also compared different models of changing teachers' attitudes. These results demonstrated that inservice presentations were the most effective method for attitude improvement, while infusing information in course work was the least effective.

Methods

At the request of an elementary school principal, the principal investigator was asked to train staff in special education inclusion. The inservice training was funded by a grant from the New Mexico Center of Teaching Excellence (CTE). The school has 550 second and third grade students from a rural school district. The students were made up of 43% Hispanic, 55% White, and 2% other ethnicities, representing a variety of socio-economic levels from upper middle class to poverty stricken. There were 27 teachers at the school, three male and 24 female. Seven teachers were Hispanic and the rest were White. The teachers were all regular education teachers, except for three special education teachers and one special education paraprofessional.

The training consisted of three two hour inservice workshops and three consultation days working with teachers. The inservice training sessions were conducted in December, March, and May of the school year. The December workshop gave an overview of inclusion, the March workshop focused on modifications for special needs students, and the May inservice covered collaboration and communication between professionals, families, and the community. The development of this inservice program was based upon a comprehensive literature review of inservice training research (Hart, Hill, Healy & Fagen, 1983; Smith & Smith, 1983; Burrello and Orbach,1982; Leyser and Heinze,1980). The following is a list of the critical findings from this review. After the items, how the researcher and the school addressed these findings will be discussed.

1. Teachers should be actively involved in planning and implementing the inservice. The inservice has to be grounded in the needs of the participants.

2. The inservice training should be school-based rather than college-based. It should be compatible with the philosophy of the school, relevant to the children of the school, and readily accessible to the participants.

3. Inservice training should be continuously evaluated and responsive to the participants.

4. There should be opportunities for problem solving, then application of these solutions. Also, there should be supervision or assistance during implementation of new skills.

5. The inservice should foster school/university collaboration.

6. Programs should be extended experiences, rather than "one-shot" presentations which are often unrelated .

The teachers were asked to fill out a needs assessment early in the Fall semester about the areas in which they would like to receive further training. The most commonly requested topic was technology and the second most requested topic was inclusion of special needs students. The principal decided to focus on the topic of inclusion over technology because of encouragement from the state department to expand special education inclusion was of great concern to his teachers. It was decided to postpone technology training to a later time.

After attending a presentation on inclusion by the principal author to state administrators (sponsored by the New Mexico Principal's Center), the principal asked her to prepare, and present, inservice training for his school. The school district had already assigned dates where school was dismissed during Friday afternoons, so these were allotted to the inservice training.

Before the first inservice presentation, the primary researcher met for one hour informally with the school's special education teachers to ascertain if her philosophy and actions was in accordance with theirs. She had already had several discussions with the principal about his views on inclusion of special needs students. She found her views compatible with both the special education teachers and school principal.

After the first inservice presentation, the researcher asked the teachers if they wanted to continue with her for two more sessions. All answered affirmatively with a show of hands, but they were also encouraged to report to their principal individually on how they felt about continuing the training in inclusion. (None voiced any objections). Also, the teachers were asked to vote on future topics. Out of a list of 5 alternatives generated by the researcher and the participants (Behavior Management,

Modifications, Collaboration, Communication, Learning Styles), the two favorites were "Modifications for Special Needs" and "Collaboration Skills".

The participants were informed that the researcher was available to come into their classrooms for individual assistance or consultation. In addition, a contact phone number and address for teachers who wanted to meet with her for consultation was distributed. She also spent one day at the school visiting individual teachers and assisting them in identifying and analyzing the problems of particular students after the first presentation. After the second inservice presentation, she return for two days to help teachers implement modifications for some of their students. At each of the following sessions, teachers and the researcher both brought up specific examples about children in their classes from their collaborative efforts with the researcher.

The teachers filled out a pre-survey before all of the presentations and a post-survey after the last one. This assessment was developed by the school principal. The researcher collected evaluation surveys after the Modification and Collaboration inservice sessions as well as a final evaluation of the entire program. The suggestions made by the teachers during the interim evaluations were incorporated into the following sessions.

Results

The results from the pre and post survey given by the principal are illustrated in Table 1. Twenty-six percent of the teachers reported that their understanding of inclusion improved, and 25% more teachers felt prepared for inclusion in their classroom. The importance of special education inclusion d reased for the teachers (12%), but also their fear and dread of inclusion decreased (12%). The pre survey demonstrated that 91% of the teachers felt they needed inservice training in inclusion, and the post survey showed that 50% felt the inservice training had greatly helped them, while the other 50% felt it had helped them somewhat.

Insert Table 1 about here

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The results from the survey given by the researcher asked more specifically about the topics covered in the training. Teachers overwhelmingly reported a better understanding of inclusion, modification and collaboration (95%, 100%, and 95%, respectively). The were also very willing to participate in making modifications and collaboration (100% and 95%). But in response to their willingness to participate in inclusion, only 58% answered affirmatively.

Eighty-four percent of the teachers reported that it was helpful to receive more than one inservice training on a related theme. Also, 84% tried out suggestions from the inservice training and felt they had students who had benefitted from these interventions.

Insert Table 2 about here

The researcher also collected surveys after the modification and collaboration sessions. This survey was developed by the New Mexico Center of Teacher Excellence which funded the inservice presentations. These scores are reported in Table 3. It appears that the teachers felt that the workshop presentations were well organized, covered the objectives, and the ideas and activities were beneficial. The overall evaluations of the presenter and workshops were exceptionally high.

Insert Table 3 about here

There were some other results not reported on the surveys. Two teachers sought the researcher for further consultation. Several additional teachers requested information on university course work available in special education. At the end of the school year, the teachers agreed to expand the inclusion of all of their special education students into regular education homeroom classes.

Discussion

The results indicate that the teachers were very receptive to the inservice training and appreciated learning about inclusion, modifications and collaboration. The only area where the results are less positive is in the area of adopting full inclusion. The teachers were more willing to adopt inclusion

of special education students than before the training and were more positive in their attitudes toward making changes for special needs students, but they continued to be reluctant toward the concept of full inclusion of special needs children into their classes.

The researcher's goal was not to convert all of the teachers to a full inclusion model but rather, encourage the teachers to be more receptive to increased integration of these students. The researcher encouraged "least restrictive environment" for special education students, which did not necessarily always translate into the regular classroom setting. Despite the resistance demonstrated by the survey results, the teachers voted unanimously to expand the inclusion of all of their special education students into regular education homeroom classes for a portion of every school day.

The goal of improving teachers attitudes toward special needs students was partially attained by reducing the teacher's fears and increasing their knowledge and skills in how to work with these children Although 100% improvement was not accomplished, there was marked improvement in the teacher's responses. The second goal was to provide a rewarding inservice training that was valued by the teachers and fostered more collaboration between the school and university. The results strongly support the attainment of this goal.

This researcher believes that if inservice training is related to the teacher's needs, done over time, and sensitive to the participants, then it can be an effective method for training teachers and changing attitudes. The inservice training focused more on improving teachers skills rather than changing their views. It appears that teachers who have more confidence in their skills, and experience success with special needs students will then have improved attitudes. If the researcher had spent more time in the classrooms, it is possible that the teachers would have had increased the improvement of their views toward inclusion of special needs students. Leyser (1988) pointed out that improved attitudes do not always translate into improved instruction for special needs students. It was the attempt of this researcher to bridge that gap by focusing on the teachers' behaviors during training, while attempting to improve their attitudes toward integration of students with special needs.

Implications for Europe

We face a great challenge in Europe in terms of educating all students for a future wherein France and England are joined by the Channel Tunnel, and communism is shifting to capitalism. In the past, most of Europe, and specifically in Slovenia, the majority of teacher training was conducted by the universities which focused primarily on pedagogy. Training in practical skills and educational methodology were considered responsibilities of the schools. Although many university professionals served as consultants, there were not inservice training workshops or presentations as conducted in the United States. In emerging countries, there has been little to no focus on exceptional students who either have learning difficulties or those who are highly able (Shaughnessy, Jausovec, Lehtonen & Kamilla, in press). There has been more concentration on making improvement to the education system for the whole population of students rather than for any one segment.

Teacher training is now slowly changing from a lecture, pedagogical mode to a more "hands on" approach. There is much less theory and more practical utilization of the methods of the more contemporary educational theorists, especially in regard to those students with special needs and learning difficulty.

In Slovenia, we publish The School Field (The International Journal of Theory and Research in Education) to disseminate results of innovative teaching practices. In EDUCA (published in Slovenian) we share practical information from teachers, to teachers, by teachers. It is in this collaborative spirit that we hope to service all students. Lastly, the European Journal of High Ability published in Munich, Germany, focuses on the specific needs of the creative, the gifted and the talented. University professors must continue to spend more time in the classroom environments consulting with teachers rather than engaging in ivory tower empiricism. Also, more international collaborations, as took place recently when these authors met in Maribor, Slovenia, are very beneficial for the sharing of current educational practices and techniques.

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Appendix A: Outline of Inservice Training Topics and Activities

1) INCLUSION

I. WHAT is INCLUSION?
- A. INCLUSION is the integration of students with special needs into the regular classroom.
- B. PARTIAL INCLUSION usually refers to integration of students with mild disabilities.
- C. FULL INCLUSION usually refers to integration of all students with disabilities.

II. WHY are we doing INCLUSION?
- A. Normalization & Civil Rights
- B. PL 94-142: Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975)
- C. Regular Education Initiative (1987)
- D. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990)

III. WHERE is INCLUSION happening?
- A. World-wide
- B. USA
- C. New Mexico

IV. WHEN is INCLUSION happening?
- A. Now
- B. It is not mandated
- c. Many districts beginning implementation

V. HOW do we do INCLUSION ?
- A. With No support (Sometimes)
- B. Instructional Aide
- C. Teacher Training
- D. Consultation Model
- E. Collaboration Model
  - 1. assistance
  - 2. tutorial
  - 3. team teaching

VI. INCLUSION Advantages
- A. District Benefits: Cost Effective
- B. Teacher Benefits: Collaboration
- C. Students Benefits: Social & Academic

VII. INCLUSION Disadvantages
- A. Change
- B. Reorganization
- C. Fear
- D. Retraining

VIII. Steps to successful INCLUSION
- A. Training
- B. Planning Time
- C. Supplies
- D. Assistance
- E. Support
- F. Realistic Expectations
- G. Benefits to all involved

IX. Changes in Special Education
- A. From EHA to IDEA
- B. From Mainstreaming to Inclusion
- C. From Segregation to Integration
- D. From Pull-out to Collaboration
- E. From Unlimited Costs to Cost effectiveness
- F. From special education as a place to a service
- G. From Students as special education responsibility to shared responsibility.

X. Activity: Teachers read a vignette of a typical special needs child . Then they discussed how they were already doing a lot to meet this child's needs already.

2) MODIFICATIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

I. Types of Modifications
- A. Classroom
- B. Schedule
- C. Materials
- D. Teaching techniques
- E. Learning techniques
- F. Homework
- G. Evaluation
- H. Grading

II. Successful Modifications and Methodologies
- A. Reading
- B. Writing
- C. Spelling/Handwriting
- D. Mathematics
- E. Social Studies
- F. Science
- G. Art, Music, Physical Education

III. How to chose a Modification (Problem Solving)
- A. Identify Problem
- B. Analyze student strengths and weaknesses
- C. Brainstorm possible modifications
- D. Chose and implement one
- E. Evaluate progress
- F. Ten Commandments of Modifications (Siegel)
  1. Do as little modification as necessary.
  2. Chose your modification according to the student's strengths.
  3. Do not do a modification unless it saves you time and energy.
  4. Make sure you implement a modification long enough for it to work.
  5. Only begin implementation of one modification at a time.
  6. Evaluate you modifications for effectiveness.
  7. Be realistic in your expectations.
  8. Explain to the student the reason for the modification. (Also the parent).
  9. You do not need to "defend" the use of the modification to other students
  10. Do not reinvent the wheel! Borrow good ideas for all modifications!

IV. Modification Suggestions (Handouts)
- A. For Different Types of Students
- B. For Different Subject Areas
- C. For Different Problem Areas

V. Activity: Teachers reviewed vignettes of students. They went through the Problem Solving sequence and identified modifications that they felt they could do in their classroom. Then we discussed possible modifications for actual students currently in their classrooms.

3) Collaboration

I. Why should we collaborate?
- A. information
- B. sharing
- C.familiarity
- D. creativity
- E. support
- F. confidence
- G. success
- H. collegiality

II. Why is is difficult to collaborate?
- A. little time
- B. Lack of support
- C. no training
- D. few models
- E. egos
- F. competition
- G. suspicion
- H. risk

III. How do we collaborate?
- A. Show initiative, do it!
- B. Do not be the expert.
- C. Improve your communication skills.
- D. Implement problem solving skills.
- E. Both succeed or both fail.
- F. Any time is fine.
- G. Mutually beneficial outcomes.
- H. Keep trying, be persistent.
- I . Be patient, it takes time.
- J. Include others, collaboration grows!

IV. Suggestions for Conflict Management
- A. Focus on issues, not people.
- B. Focus on issues that have the greatest potential to be agreed upon.
- C. Reduce the emotional component.
- E. Often third party involvement is helpful.
- F. Sometimes it is better to "live with it!"

V. Communication skills
- A. Active Listening
  - 1.paraphrase
  - 2.reflect
- B. "I statements"
  - 1.feeling
  - 2. not judgement
- C. Direct, meaningful, open-ended questions
- D. Nonverbal communication
- E. Implement problem solving skills

VI. Activity: The teachers were given time to practice active listening, I statements and questioning skills in small groups. Then they were given a hypothetical situation where they had to collaborate using effective communication skills. the teachers also discussed ideas on when collaboration would be helpful to them in teaching special needs students.

Table 1 . Pre-Survey and Post-Survey Results (in percentages)

A. As a classroom teacher, what is your understanding of school classroom "inclusion"?

	Pre (n=23)	Post (n=18)	% Change
None	0	0	0
Very Little	22	6	-16
Some	65	56	-9
Much	13	39	+26

B. Are you professionally prepared for inclusion in your classroom at this time?

	Pre (n=22)	Post (n=17)	% Change
Yes	22	47	+25
No	30	18	-12
Not Sure	48	35	-13

C. In your opinion, how important is inclusion to our educational system both now and in the future?

	Pre (n=22)	Post (n=18)	% Change
Very	29	17	-12
Some	62	72	+10
None	10	11	+1

D. From what you now know, do you fear or dread inclusion practices in our school and classroom?

	Pre (n=22)	Post (n=18)	% Change
Yes	45	39	-6
No	32	44	+12
Not Sure	23	17	-6

E. (Pretest) Do you feel there is a need for inservice training and staff development activities in the preparation for implementing inclusion programs? (n=23)

Yes 91 No 0 Not sure 9

E. (Post test) How much has the inservice activities on school and classroom inclusion practices benefitted our staff? (n=18)

Much 50 Some 50 Little 0 None 0

Table 2. Inclusion Survey (N=19)

1. I attended the inservice on:

a) inclusion 95% b) modifications 90% c) collaboration 90%

1. Do you have a better understanding of inclusion?

Yes	95%	No	0%	No Answer	5%

2. do you have a better understanding of modifications?

Yes	100%	No	0%	No Answer	0%

3. Do you have a better understanding of collaboration?

Yes	95%	No	5%	No Answer	0%

4. Are you more willing to participate in making in inclusion?

Yes	58%	No	21%	No Answer	21%

5. Are you more willing to participate in making modifications?

Yes	100%	No	0%	No Answer	0%

6. Are you more willing tp participate in collaboration?

Yes	95%	No	0%	No Answer	5%

7. Was it helpful to have more than one inservice on a related theme?

Yes	84%	No	0%	No Answer	16%

8. Did you try out any of the suggestions you received from the services?

Yes	84%	No	5%	No Answer	11%

9. Have any of your students benefitted from the information you received from the inservices?

Yes	84%	No	5%	No Answer	11%

Table 3. Evaluation of Inservice Sessions

	Modification: n= 24	Collaboration: n=24	
1. The organization of this workshop was:	Excellent	7654321	Poor
	Modification: 6.44	Collaboration: 6.66	
2. The objectives of this workshop were:	Clearly Evident	7654321	Vague
	Modification: 6.71	Collaboration: 6.71	
3. The work of the presenter was:	Excellent	7654321	Poor
	Modification: 6.71	Collaboration: 6.71	
4. The ideas and activities presented were:	Very Interesting	7654321	Dull
	Modification: 6.62	Collaboration: 6.46	
5. The scope (coverage) was:	Very Adequate	7654321	Inadequate
	Modification: 6.41	Collaboration: 6.38	
6.My attendance at this workshop should prove:	Very Beneficial	7654321	Not Beneficial
	Modification: 6.59	Collaboration: 6.42	
7.Overall, I consider this workshop:	Excellent	7654321	Poor
	Modification: 6.74	Collaboration: 6.63	